

United States within prescribed limits, but that they only owe it while they who are the administrators of the law adhere to the provisions and the restraints of the Constitution. That, in my judgment, is as fatal a heresy and as fatal an error as exists in the extreme States' rights theory. If the authorities who administer the government or execute the laws, constitutionally elected by the people of the country according to the provisions of the laws under which we live, are distasteful or objectionable to certain persons, and do not administer the laws according to the rules laid down, what must be the position of gentlemen who wish to be true to the government? They must either submit to this malfeasance in office, they must submit to the maladministration, and wait until they can redress those grievances in the civil and constitutional mode, or, as those in armed rebellion have done, they must come out and make war upon the government of the United States and repudiate its authority. That is the only alternative, put it in any shape we may. If they are not disposed to recognize the men who administer the laws, they must either submit or go out. Submitting is a tacit and implied obedience to the government of the United States; a willingness to wait until the grievances can be redressed is the constitutional mode.

Abraham Lincoln, for instance, is elected President of the United States. Gentlemen living in Maryland, in New York, or in South Carolina say that they will not submit if Abraham Lincoln is elected; they will repudiate the government. While we adhere to the Constitution, say they, we repudiate Abraham Lincoln; and because he is elected, although the Constitution remains intact, and as capable of exercising all its functions as before, we will go out. That is precisely what Southern States did. This is the predicament in which these gentlemen place themselves who proceed upon this fallacy; that because certain men administer the laws, if that administration changes, we are not to be patient; we are not to have confidence in the government and stand firm and loyal to it; but we must go out because certain men may be in power whom we cannot indorse.

What has been my experience and what has been the experience of many other members of this body? Franklin Pierce—poor Pierce! I will say, although I do not intend to bandy the names of retired gentlemen, famous or infamous, who, according to some accounts, was a modern Solomon, whose name was adorned with lustre too magnificent to be beheld, and that might only faintly be conceived; and if it had been the pleasure of the gentlemen of this body to contemplate the splendors of his reign in the light which was so radiant in the sight of the gentleman from Prince George's, (Mr. Belt,) we might have exclaimed, as the Queen of Sheba did of

old, that the half had not been told us. He was not the man of my choice, and he was not the choice of many other people throughout the country; but we felt no disposition to revolt. No such emotion stirred in my bosom. No such feeling had an existence in my mind. I felt it due to the government to be loyal to him, and so did the people throughout the country. I entertain the belief that "truth is mighty and will prevail." I believe that a great principle cannot be restrained or kept down. I have confidence in the ability of the people to determine wisely and justly respecting every subject that may be presented to them for consideration. I believe they are more capable of acting wisely, fairly, and impartially than those who hold places of power, and who are interested in a very great degree. I believe that what is necessary for the interests of this people, is to allow the power to be exercised through the constituted medium of government; and I believe the power is ample and full for any redress that is needed, through the medium of those courts composed of the wisest and the best that could be selected by human judgment.

I held on with others, knowing that four years was but a short time, and that we should then have an opportunity of securing perhaps another man that would be more satisfactory to us as the Chief Magistrate of the country; when, lo and behold! James Buchanan, a son of Pennsylvania, was borne to the Chair of State, and borne their under circumstances not at all creditable. I have nothing to say against the men who sustained Mr. Buchanan. I have no affiliation with the pertinacity with which men cling to old party ties. The man who can dissolve his connection with any political party with which he may heretofore have acted, in order to sustain the government when it is in peril, is my friend and my brother. I glory in his patriotism and in his resolution. Mr. Buchanan was carried to the Chair of State under circumstances that were morally wrong, and did this country great detriment. The public mind was watched from one end of the nation to the other, and the rod was held in *terrorem* over the heads of the people of this country; for they said then that if a certain man was elected President of the United States, there would be secession, disunion, and civil war. This was all morally wrong, and we are now reaping the legitimate but fearful consequences of that wrong.

Millard Fillmore, of New York, was my choice for President; and he received the vote of the single State of Maryland. Mr. Buchanan was elected. Did we secede then, according to the views entertained by gentlemen? No, sir, we held on still. We had given our support to Fillmore, because he was a true and a faithful servant, and in him we recognized the embodiment of good Union-